

# consulting today

Volume 5, Issue 4

Winter 2001

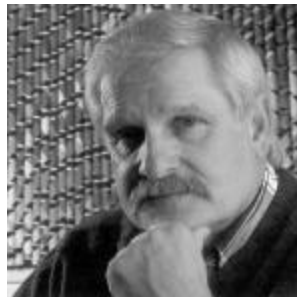
## In this issue:

- 1 **Lead Change With A Leadership Network:** Jeff Evans and Chuck Schaefer describe how to select and nurture change leaders.
- 4 **Going Virtual:** Kathy Miller outlines the decisions and steps required for their consulting group to do it.
- 7 **Big Meeting or Presentation? Take a Few Tips from Actors:** Art Feinglass has the tips.
- 9 **Organizational Change — Managers Can Help:** Paula Griffin reviews the results of research on what managers can do.
- 11 **Great Marketing Virus Just Spreads and Spreads:** Ron Knowlton offers practical advice for infecting the world with your message.
- 13 **The IC Structure:** Want a quick exercise to teach planning and a lot more? Kathy Joyce has one.
- 13 **Action.**

## Lead Change With A Leadership Network

By Chuck Schaefer and Jeff Evans

If you want to sponsor a lasting change, search out the people who will be visible leading learners — people to cooperate in the work of creating a new vision and living out the changes in their behaviors. We've come to call this virtual group a *change leadership network*, a critical mass of natural leaders aligned with the new future.



These people will be the front-runners in understanding the implications of the change for their organizations and thinking through how their work systems will need to be impacted. *Your change leadership challenge is to form and nurture this phenomenon.*

*"These people will be frontrunners in understanding the implications of the change..."*

Why a special "network?" Why not just depend on the formal hierarchy and the normal chain of command? Certainly, people with formal authority in a traditional organization have communication channels in place and have more leverage for pulling a change ahead than anyone else. Why not just depend on them? There are a couple of reasons.

First, some people in a change leadership network will be bosses; some will not be, since the natural leaders aren't always

on the organization chart.

Second, bosses are busy. Depending on them to work together to create an unaccustomed future at the same time they are responsible for maintaining the success of the present has generally not worked out well.

In fact, their jobs and working relationships are *specifically* designed to enable the current state in the face of all kinds of dis-

ruptions, and they do their jobs well.

So the third point is this: people in the formal hierarchy aren't always "onboard" for driving change — they may have a lot to lose, and may themselves be big time "targets" of the change. Major changes often need more help than they can give.

**Who?** Identify these leaders by the influence that they presently provide to the organization. Also, look outside of the organization for key figures who can provide a pull towards the vision for the future as well as people inside who can give it a push. Look for the less than obvious source of leadership on the edges of the system. Community figures, union leaders, and customers can all provide a positive source of leadership in a change

*Continued on page 2*

## Networks, continued

*Continued from page 1*

effort when they are enrolled and committed to the vision.

A change leadership network will need some members in the formal hierarchy, especially key senior sponsors and people with control of needed assets in the earlier phases. But don't forget to look for leaders among the technical advisors, process operators, sales staff, trainers and many others.

**How many?** To answer this question, you'll want to think through the number and locations of change leaders that you need by studying the diffusion pattern of the organization, the potential impact of the changes, and how

close to implementation you are. The objective is to get a large enough group to establish local visions of the new future, and to identify any local issues that must be dealt with.

As you get closer to implementation, the numbers will grow. Informal leadership roles will often become formal transition management responsibilities, and the regular hierarchy can be mustered to take on change leadership tasks through the normal channels of command and control.

The more complex the change, the more complex your leadership network will need to be. Here are some examples:

- In a fundamental business model change for a national marketing organization of about 1500 people, we ended up with about 180 contacts from inside and four customer groups of about twenty people each on the outside.
- In a large manufacturing plant of about 1200, we only needed a couple of people from each of the five major organizational groups since the changes didn't impact the culture much.
- In a small manufacturing facility of about 380, we ended up with monthly "get-together" of about 30 people with two-thirds regulars and a third guests because they were moving from a strong standard hierarchy to a pretty radical team based way of operating. These meetings continued for more than a year, under their own steam, after all consulting support ended and the new work system was initially put in place.

Getting started in the right way will help ensure success. Here are a few key steps.

**Position the role.** First, it is important for the people you enlist to understand that their primary job is to change their own behaviors, not to try to change the behaviors of others. Once they get that firmly in mind, they will be more comfortable with the idea of being a change leader.

But they should know what they are getting into. Because these change leaders will also operate in their regular roles in the larger organization, becoming a part of the change leadership network will pose some difficulty and even risk. They will continue to do their on-going work while taking on an additional component as a promoter of the vision. There will be extra work for these people.

A common error is to think of change leadership networks as deployment taskforces, used late in the game to roll out the changes. Network is not a code word for a formal change deployment structure. A leadership network is a creative change initiating body, an early-on phenomenon whose work is as much to set the direction of the organization as it is to eventually enable its transition.

**Acknowledge the risks.** Often there can be no promises of payment or reward for the network members' role in the change, and they know it — and will still give it their passion. If you can provide safety nets, great, but sometimes safety nets for the few undermine their ability to be trusted by the many.

The only advice we have here is don't make the risks an "unmentionable" topic. Help the network talk it out, deal with the realities and get on with job of supporting the change and each other in the now and in the future. In one large chemical company business unit, the network participated in carefully designed its own demise in the face of overwhelming market realities.

Then the members continued to work to successfully place every one of the group's employees even after they themselves were working in other jobs in other locations.

**Help the network form and think big.** Engaging potential change leaders in exploring the overall vision and creating local visions of the desired future state is the best way we know of to get people excited and evoking their leadership. Take the concept of "building a network" literally. Maybe you could get it started by throwing a "party," so to speak. Large group processes (like a Future Search or other conference) can be a real help in getting a network going, and today's newest communication technologies can keep it connected.

*Continued on page 3*

## Networks, continued

*Continued from page 2*

Help the network members think about the possibilities that lie within the changes in addition to just getting the initial things done and in place. The idea is to create a tension between people's present thinking and a larger range of possibilities.

Provide field trips. Bring in "Here's what we did!" visitors. When we were working on developing a "high performance organization" with a complex of refineries, a light bulb came on for the lead executive while riding back from a visit to large computer manufacture. He realized that they had developed a "competency for changing" that was even more important than the immediate changes that were being put in place. This fresh perspective diffused through the refinery's network and lead to some truly creative local initiatives.

**Equip them to sell the change.** It is vital that network members be clear on the vision, understand the benefits of the change, and be able to describe them easily.

You shouldn't need to oversell. If it is truly a good change, simply helping the network members get thoroughly grounded in the vision and the realities of both the costs and benefits will do the job. This is not only for their own motivation, but also to prepare them to answer the question "Why?" over and over again throughout the organization.

**Enable them to act.** Members of a change leadership network will participate because have some passion to create positive changes in the organization, but they will need sponsorship for the activities they are about to pursue.

*"Provide field trips [for a] fresh perspective."*

This is another gift you can give them: work with their senior sponsors to make sure they can actually get the sanction, resources and protection they need to participate. Most importantly, ensure they can operate publicly in their role. The people with whom they interface need to be aware that these people will have a special role for some time to come.

Provide training, skill development, and mentors from the sponsor group, and any additional support network members need to help them move the vision forward.

**Stay the course.** The change leadership network is essentially a body that exists outside the system. Eventually, as the changes are absorbed by the system, the leadership network will dissolve into the woodwork.

However, as the full implications of the changes diffuse into the depths and far reaches of the system, sustainability requires that there is still the kind of support available to the diffusion and development that the change leadership network provided in the glamour days of the major impacts. To sustain the good work, the system needs to create a way for this to happen.

A change leadership network's job is to engage all parts of the existing organization and serve as a linkage between the sponsorship for change, the change stewards, the targeted populations and the emerging work system. The people in it will stand as beacons for the change and local integrators of the unique needs of all parts of the organization. ☞

*Chuck Schaefer and Jeff Evans are change-management consultants based in Danville, CA and co-authors of Ten Tasks of Change: Demystifying Changing Organizations (Jossey-Bass, 2001). They have been involved with major technical and organizational change for over 20 years. Chuck can be reached at 925.837.1561 or scschaef@worldnet.att.net. Reach Jeff at 925.552.0394 or Jeff.Evans@gaian.com.*



# Going Virtual

By Kathy Miller

Four years ago, our company decided to go virtual. We made that decision for several reasons. Our company is a small consulting firm (6 associates in Louisville including 2 companies with additional employees and 10 –12 elsewhere) that specializes in integrating organization and human performance systems with business strategy. We wanted to stay small while continuing to provide exceptional services to our predominantly large corporate clients, whose needs would be a moving target. Going virtual appeared to provide us with at least four strategic advantages:



**Balance available expertise with project mix.** Our business strategy requires us to offer a wide range of services to our clients. So we need quick, but not necessarily continuous, access to strong expertise in a wide array of knowledge and skill areas. At the same time, we need associates who are superior in forming and maintaining long-term relationships with our clients. Going virtual allows us to retain a cadre of associates who match these requirements.

**Increase the availability of talent.** We were facing challenges in recruiting the talent to work out of our Louisville, Kentucky-based offices. The demand for high-level expertise frequently outweighed the supply in our knowledge-driven economy. Organizing virtually allows us to cast a wider net in our search for expertise. We believed that we could attract talent by offering flexibility to our associates in how, when and where they worked.

**Increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness.** We believed that we could provide more efficient and cost-effective services if our consultants were located close to our clients. Proximity would afford our clients quicker accessibility to our consultants as well as lower long-distance travel costs. In addition, the reduction of travel should allow our consultants more time to engage in truly value-added activities for the clients.

**Become a more agile organization.** We need to be able to move quickly in response to unexpected change and new market opportunities. We must bring together teams of people and enterprises with the competencies needed to respond to quickly and expertly.

*"We were facing challenges in recruiting the talent to work out of our... offices."*

Once we made the decision to organize virtually, we had to choose among a number of virtual alternatives. Four we considered but did not choose included:

- *Communities of Practice or Learning Networks.* This involves groups of people with similar interests coming together to do research, share experiences and learn from each other.
- *Virtual Supply Chains.* A virtual supply chain is a vertically integrated enterprise organized for dealing with products that have a short life-span, are focused on a very specific customer, target market, event, or product.
- *B2B Brokers.* An enterprise with a broker in the middle matching up buyers and sellers of products and services
- *Marketing Consortia.* Involves several enterprises pooling resources as a means of creating a united marketing effort.

The two we chose are:

**Virtual teaming.** This involves several individuals working together from varying locations through the use of technology. We invested heavily in technologies such as terminal servers and teleconferencing equipment to enable us to carry out our day-to-day work from a variety of locations.

**Virtual enterprises.** This is a way to involve people from a variety of organizations collaborating temporarily to address or seek out business opportunities that would capitalize on their combined capabilities. These working relationships can be face-to-face and/or facilitated through technology. Miller Consultants' collaborative partners include both individuals and other companies. While our associates work with us long-term, frequently they also retain their own professional and/or company identities as well.

There were several challenges in making this work for us:

**1. Selecting the right technology.** We needed technology we could use, maintain, scale up as we grow, and blend with that of our partners and clients.

We chose a variety of groupware solutions, such as audioconferencing, videoconferencing, and computer conferencing including chat rooms, bulletin boards and Internet meetings. In addition, we developed a knowledge warehouse that resides on a terminal server.

*Continued on page 5*

## Going Virtual, continued

*Continued from page 4*

Through the internet-connected terminal server, our associates and clients can access the information and data that is relevant to them and their projects.

**2. Selecting the right associates.** Having decided to organize virtually, we had a much larger universe from which to choose associates. It was important that we select people with not only exceptional expertise in a particular field or methodology, but also strong relationship-building skills for face-to-face and long-distance environments. In addition, we look for those who are compatible with our culture, including our values and ethical standards.

**3. Providing a supportive environment for associates.** We wanted to maintain a culture that would be appealing to our existing team members, and would attract additional talent. We know that people like that want:

*"...we select people with not only expertise in a particular field but also strong relationship-building skills.."*

- A balance of work and play that enables them to get to know others in the organization and to have fun with each other while they build relationships that support the work.
- Opportunities for the learning that is one of the reasons for participating in a community of practice.
- Strong support from the organization through databases, technology, marketing expertise and administrative services.
- The ability to maintain their own professional identity.
- Clear expectations for how work will be carried out, and standardized processes, protocols, templates and materials. In addition, associates expect to be able to contribute to and improve processes and materials.
- Compensation appropriate to their level and their willingness to trade off steady full-time work for work that capitalizes on their expertise and interests.

**4. Selling the concept to clients.** Our fourth, and most important challenge was to convince our clients of the soundness of our new organizational structure. We based our marketing campaign on what we knew about our clients' needs and desires. Our clients want:

**Access.** Clients want quick, if not immediate, accesses to our consultants when they need them. So we choose associates who are located near high concentrations of clients, whenever possible.

**Expertise.** Naturally, clients want consultants who are among the best in their fields and can respond armed with up-to-date knowledge of the client com-

pany, culture, and industry. We must maintain relationships with a wide range of associates so we can quickly assemble a project team with the experiences; skills and expertise that will fit the client organization like a glove.

**Trustworthiness.** In addition to expertise, clients want consultants they can trust, with strong relationship-building skills, both face-to-face and through distance technologies such as e-mails and the telephone.

**Affordability.** True anytime, but even more so in tight times, clients want the services to be affordable. (This was a nice surprise. Since we became a virtual enterprise, our overhead has been lower and we are more productive. We spend less time traveling, debating company policies and engaging in company politics.)

**Consistency.** Miller Consultants must present one united face. Clients object to services that seem disjointed or to Miller Consultant's associates who seem disconnected from the company. So we have established methods, materials, templates, procedures, and protocols that associates can access virtually. We also must provide access to someone located in our central offices to answer questions, coach, and trouble-shoot with associates.

### **What's working:**

There are benefits to our decision beyond even what we expected. Here's what we're happy about:

- We have the strongest group of associates in our 20-year history, and we're delighted.
- Our company culture is very healthy. We work harder at building relationships with each other since we work virtually and don't see each other every day.
- We have targeted new clients that are located in geographic proximity to our consultants, and have added associates and alliances to our team in geographic proximity to our existing long-term client organizations.
- Our clients can count on us for greater and more diverse value since we became virtual due to our wide ranging skills and experiences.
- Our work has become more systematized. We have developed protocols that allow associates to learn quickly and perform consistently. While systematization can benefit any type of organization, we found it to be a critical need when we became virtual.

### **What we're still working on:**

All is not perfect in any enterprise. There are some things in virtual organizations that are still a challenge,

*Continued on page 6*

## Going Virtual, continued.

*Continued from page 5*


and some that will always be so. For example:

- Balancing workload is still a challenge. Although we have more resources to draw from most of our associates have priorities in addition to those that fall under the Miller Consultants umbrella. We are addressing this challenge by ensuring that our enterprise includes some redundancies in skill and knowledge sets.
- Maintaining long-distance and cross-organizational relationships requires continuous effort. We are always vigilant for opportunities to assist our associates in forming strong bonds with the company and the individuals that comprise it.
- We have found that relationships should be built face-to-face initially and whenever sensitive issues arise. Distance technologies can facilitate the maintenance of relationships, but they do not match the value of nor substitute for early face-to-face interactions.
- Business arrangements within our alliances have proven to be more complicated than we estimated at first. While we use a contracting process to structure our relationships, we have found that flexibility is the key to meeting the needs of all of the stakeholders, including our own, our associates' and our clients'.

*"Maintaining long-distance and cross-organizational relationships requires continuous effort."*

- We must work hard at presenting one face to the client. Since those with whom we are in alliances have other interests in addition to Miller Consultants' work, we have to continuously clarify and evaluate how we communicate our relationships to clients.
- We must improve our abilities to market the myriad competencies that come from our alliances. To date, we have formed our alliances in response to identified opportunities. We should be more proactive and aggressive at seeking out opportunities in which we can truly capitalize on our many resources.

Our company continues to thrive and our client list is growing. We are continuing to nurture our ongoing affiliations with associate and clients while we establish new ones. We are

finding our work and our professional relationships to be fruitful and satisfying. We believe that going virtual has truly contributed to our success. Yet we are mindful of the pitfalls and constantly alert to challenges that might face us down the road. After all, the key is to remain agile. 

*Kathleen Miller, Ph.D. is the president of Miller Consultants, based in Louisville, Kent., and specializing in organizational change and people performance. You can reach Kathy at 502.451.2929, [kathy@millerconsultants.com](mailto:kathy@millerconsultants.com) or on the web at [www.millerconsultants.com](http://www.millerconsultants.com).*



# Big Meeting or Presentation? Take a few Tips From Actors

By Art Feinglass

Successful consultants have a lot in common with good actors. A consultant must know how to capture and hold the attention of any audience, from a room full of people to a single key decision maker. Consultants can learn a lot from the acting world about projecting an image, staying focused on their role, and communicating with maximum impact.

Working with professional actors to provide harassment and diversity training programs to Fortune 500 clients, have found several skills that are particularly useful for consultants.

**Relax.** The actor's natural enemy — and the consultant's — is tension. Tension interferes with creativity, the emotions, and the five senses, all key to a strong, effective performance. So relaxing is no small matter. Actors say that knowing how to relax is the most important part of their art — up to seventy-five per cent of being able to accomplish their desired results on stage

**Stretch and limber to reduce tension:** There are several neck stretches that actors commonly use.

- Lean your head to the right, then back, then to the left and then forward again. Repeat the circles in each direction three or four times.
- Twist your head to the right, bringing your chin over your shoulder. Face front again and then twist your head to the left, to bring it over your other shoulder. Face forward again. Repeat to each side three or four times.
- Try to lay your head on your right shoulder. Be careful not to raise your right shoulder. Bring your head back to center and repeat the exercise, this time trying to lay your head on your left shoulder. Bring your head up again. Repeat to each side three to four times.
- A good, healthy yawn is an excellent way to release tension in the throat as well as in the vital muscles around the mouth that are used in speaking. It can also supply needed exercise to the diaphragm. Tension in the diaphragm can interfere with breathing and cause shortness of breath.
- "Count down" is a simple, extremely effective exer-



*"The actor's natural enemy — and the consultant's, is tension."*

cise. Inhale very slowly while counting backward from five; then exhale very slowly, again counting backward from five.

- "Tense and release" is a popular exercise that can be easily applied to almost any situation. Start by slowly tightening the muscles in your toes, then in your feet, legs, abdomen, chest, arms, neck and face until every muscle is rigid. Then relax every muscle at once. Repeat the exercise one or two times.
- Shake your hands. Movement is one of the ways people dispel tension, and shaking the hands and arms can dispel quite a lot of tension. Do it just before you walk into the room.

Try these exercises just before you enter a meeting or begin an important conversation. You'll find the release of tension will make you better, that is, more relaxed, at whatever you have to do.

Here are some other secrets actors use to increase their power and presence.

**Listen.** Actors say that "acting is *re-acting*." In order to react you have to really hear the other person first. It's easy to spot a poor actor. They are the ones who aren't listening to the other characters — they're only waiting for their own turn to speak. It looks artificial on stage and it looks even worse in real life.

To be effective, consultants, like actors, must be "present." Make a point of really listening to those with who you are meeting, and let them *know* that you're really listening.

**Articulate.** Speaking clearly and distinctly conveys your meaning with power and style. You can sharpen your articulation by doing the following exercises periodically.

- Let your jaw muscles relax and slowly circle your lower jaw in a full swing to the left and then to the right to promote full vowel sounds and proper consonant formation.
- Pucker up. Pucker your lips and extend them as far forward as you can. Then pull them back tight and stretch them wide, pressing your lower lip over your upper. This will increase the suppleness and flexibility of your lips, allowing for more precise pronunciation.

*Continued on page 8*

## Tips From Actors, continued

*Continued from page 7*

**Use language well.** Poor grammar, a limited vocabulary, over reliance on profanity or jargon can distract from you and from your message. Few tools are as powerful in influencing people as strong, vivid and clear speech.

One popular technique employed by actors for enriching speech and vocabulary is regular sight reading. If you spend half an hour each day reading aloud from some of the great works of literature -- the essays of Emerson, the poetry of Emily Dickinson, the novels of Charles Dickens -- you will soon find that you handle the English language with heightened impact.

**Focus.** A professional actor does not rush to the theater and immediately dash out onto the stage. And no professional consultant should rush headlong into any situation that will demand their full concentration.

When an actor arrives at the theater he or she leaves enough extra time to prepare themselves psychologically for their performance. You should also make a point to structure the “quiet time” you need, even if only a few minutes, to collect yourself and focus on your objectives. That short time you take to get focused on your goals will result in a far more effective delivery of your message.

**Care for your “instrument.”** Professional actors talk about their “instrument.” Simply put, the actor *is* the instrument. Just as a musician plays a trumpet or piano, actors “play” themselves. And you are also your own instrument. Everything you know — everything you are — has to come through that instrument to enable you to effectively reach the people around you.

Like a good musician, it is absolutely vital that you take proper care of *you*. Get enough rest, exercise, eat and drink properly and drink plenty of water. You are a

performer and the quality of the performance depends on you.

Before an important meeting, or any interaction that you know will require you to be at your best, try to avoid people and situations that make you tense. Stay away as much as possible from things like phone calls and meetings that you know will involve conflict. Return those calls and schedule those meetings *after* your important encounter, not before. Your goal is to be as calm and relaxed as possible.

**Prepare for the role.** The great screen actor Spencer Tracy said that the two secrets of good acting were: know your lines and be on time. In order to be truly relaxed and confident you need to prepare for your role as thoroughly as a serious actor prepares for their role on the stage or in a film.

To prepare, mentally review upcoming meetings in as much detail as possible. Clarify your own goals and objectives. Decide how you want your “audience” to react to what you have to communicate. Try to imagine what the other people involved are likely to say and what your response will be.

To deliver an effective performance you must know your own material well and be comfortable with it, from first opening lines to final closing “curtain.”

Part of being an effective consultant is playing the role. With a little preparation, you can be a star. ☞

*Art Feinglass is President of Access Communications Inc., a New York based corporate training firm that uses professional actors for training in sexual harassment awareness, diversity, conflict resolution and customer service. He is a co-author of Dr. Ruth's Guide, (Warner) and Your Management I.Q. (Simon and Schuster). Art can be reached at (212) 245-5913 or at access-comm@msn.com*

*“Two secrets of great acting: know your lines and be on time.”*

Spencer Tracy





# Organizational Change: Managers Can Help

By Paula Yardley Griffin

Several years ago I had the opportunity to research the actions of managers in times of organizational change. I was looking for things first line or middle manager could do to make a difference in employee morale and productivity during uncertain times.

I looked into the effects of major change at nearly two dozen companies in nine industries — changes like mergers, acquisitions, downsizing, and Employee Stock Ownership Plan introductions.

There were a couple of surprises from the research. Here's one: You can't predict how productive and happy employees will be during and after a change by how productive and happy they were before the change. A manager cannot rely on the fact that people will maintain their level of productivity and morale, even if it is high. When change happens, the manager must intervene to support success.

Effective managers do indeed intervene. The research showed that there were some fundamental actions managers could take that will increase employee morale and productivity during periods of change. The greater the effects of the change, the more necessary are the interventions of the manager.

The core message to managers seems to be this: Give employees a sense of security and a feeling of being respected, supported, and involved, and you will get their best efforts during, and following, change periods. This prescription would not be bad advice anytime. It becomes critical during times of organizational change.

There are seven things the research showed managers could do to increase morale and productivity when their employees are undergoing major organizational change:

**1. Be fair.** The manager should treat employees fairly and should be perceived as doing so. This is important in two ways. When downsizing occurs, remaining employees will judge the manager and the company by the way departing employees are handled. Every action becomes a message.

During this period, the manager must be seen to be fair. That means assigning work evenly, even when some staff are learning new skills or are wishing for more interesting assignments. It means visibly, and at every opportunity, providing information, attention, recognition, and rewards, and doing it in an

even-handed manner.

These are things an effective manager does routinely, but it's important at this time that the staff knows your role and what you are doing. In the middle of change, with more work, more worry, more ambiguity, and often fewer resources, it's reassuring to staff members to see the efforts of the manager on their behalf.



**2. Keep promises.** It is important during this period to keep any promises that you make to avoid adding to the uncertainty employees face.

Managers are naturally cautious about making promises in a time when they may not be able to deliver on them. Two things make it hard to know what to say:

- Employees seeking answers and security can see even innocent remarks as a verbal commitment.
- A manager could be misinformed, or, as happens so often in turbulent times, not informed at all.

This concern leads some managers to make no promises at all, indeed to disengage from employees for fear of being asked to make commitments. This is dangerous too.

The only safe course is to be as authentic as you can be, to tell people that you will tell them what you can, that there will be a lot you won't know for a while.

**3. Involve employees.** Involve them in planning for the change, in creating the vision of the future, in planning the current work and in designing the evolving procedures.

Meet with them, individually, as often as possible, to review work, answer questions, or coach. This will provide the feelings of respect, support, and value that enable them to keep on despite the turmoil.

In one successful reengineering effort (there were a few), a company involved hundreds of employees in teams that designed the way a major change would be implemented in the various offices. Some of those involved knew they would be losing their jobs at the end.

The involvement enabled all employees, even those who would eventually be leaving, to find some control and have some choices in the change. Productivity and morale stayed surprisingly high, and the employer was able to keep key positions staffed as the change progressed.

*"When change happens, the manager must intervene to support success."*

*Continued on page 10*

## Managers Can Help, continued

*Continued from page 9*

**4. Control anxiety.** Anxiety or calmness is catching. The manager who deals well with his or her own fears about the future will not add to the natural fears of employees. Radiating security helps establish a climate where people can move on effectively.

It's clear that radiating security during a period when your own job may be in doubt, is difficult. Managers are responsible for seeing to other peoples' stability when there may be no one to see to the manager's.

One risky trap managers can fall into during periods of change is transparency — saying or implying that they do not agree with management's decisions, and are victims of orders from above. Transparency is always a bad posture for managers, since they are part of the management team, and it is even more critical during times of change that the members of the management team present a united face to the staff.

**5. Balance the focus.** A focus entirely on work at this critical period would deny the validity of the emotions and the value of their owners. Focusing only on the emotions would encourage employees to wallow in self-pity for longer than necessary. So the focus must be balanced—the work and the change, the long term and the short term.

One of the most important and difficult things managers must do is deal with the emotional reactions of employees to the change. If employees are in denial or shock, the manager may need to act to move them further through the process, knowing that the next step may be anger or bargaining, or both — interactions most managers would prefer to avoid. Yet if employees cannot express their feelings about the change, they may become frozen in an early stage of adapting, and may not move on effectively.

At the same time, the manager and the group owe the organization their best efforts to achieve organizational goals, even in trying times.

*“One of the most important and difficult things managers must do is deal with the emotional reactions of employees.”*

One technique managers have often found effective is to schedule a department meeting toward the end of each day. In that meeting, they can discuss what's going on, provide support for those who need it, do rumor control, and still keep the balance of the day available for production.

**6. Communicate.** A second surprise in the research was how uninterested people said they were in communication. The literature had suggested that communication would be a high priority, but those interviewed rarely mentioned it. There may be two reasons for this.

Our first thought is that in this research, employees are describing the end result they desire from the managers' actions. Communication is not an end, but a means. Employees appreciate it when it will help them feel secure, valued, respected and supported. They don't want communication for its own sake.

The second reason it may not have been mentioned separately is that the points above, when done well, contain a lot of communication.

Nevertheless, the value of communicating with employees frequently during changing times cannot be overstated.

**7. Know you can't do it all.** The final message to managers involves the large uncertainty factor. There is, despite the best intentions and the most thoughtful actions, a great deal in an organization and in a changing environment that a manager cannot control.

The actions of outsiders and senior management, the effects of the corporate culture, and the climate of the business and community environment — and much more — may all play a part in shaping the forces at work in the changing situation.

The manager can help employees clarify, interpret, and focus. At some point even the best manager must say “Let's wait and see.”

*Paula Yardley Griffin is an editor of Consulting Today.*



# Great Marketing Virus Just Spreads and Spreads!

By Ron Knowlton

Catching a virus on the internet can be a scary thing - unless, of course, it's a marketing virus - in which case it's really a very, very good thing! Why? Because with a marketing virus (word of mouth advertising), nobody gets sick. The virus simply spreads your marketing message far and wide while it provides value to everyone it touches.

Our "virus" is a brief message from the sponsor or advertiser attached to or embedded in a free ebook, javascript, software, or any of several other easy ways to send your message out to the world.

The magic of this message, though, is that it is easy to spread to others who spread it on. And they spread it not because they like the advertising message, but because they like the product they received that it was part of. This marketing technique is known as "viral marketing."

But is this form of marketing only reserved for the "professionals" with big advertising budgets? No, not at all! Let's take a look at how it could work for anyone doing business on the internet.

**Articles.** If you can write an informative and interesting article or report, you can place the "virus" (or your marketing message) at the end of the article. This is usually called a "resource box." (See my resource box at the end of this article.) If you reprint this article then others will not only read the article, but likely read my resource box at the end of the article as well.

And if you really like the article (hint, hint) you might even email it on to a friend or two. Or publish it in your newsletter or on your web site. And then others will read the article and I get a little bit of recognition and maybe my advertising message (resource box) gets read!

You can get the publishers to come to you. There are places where you can "post" your articles where publishers and webmasters can see it and then use it if they like your article.

Writers don't get paid, but they get free advertising, which may be just as valuable! Here's a list of places where newsletter (ezine) publishers and webmasters can see your article and then use it in their publications or on their web sites:

- <http://www.ezinearticles.com>;
- "Ideamarketers" at <http://www.ideamarketers.com>;
- "Find Your Dream" at <http://www.findyourdream.com>;
- "Free Content" (mailing list) <mailto:freecontent@egroups.com>;
- "Article Announce" (mailing list) at: <http://www.web-sources.net/articlesub.htm>;
- "Publish In Yours" (mailing list) <mailto:publishinyours@egroups.com>;
- <http://www.writebusiness.com>.



*"The virus spreads your marketing message far and wide while it provides value..."*

**E-Books.** If you're even more ambitious, you can create an e-book and give it away for free. Of course the e-book contains your name, the name of your site, and promotes anything you wish to promote. Just place your advertising message or a link to your web site on each page.

The recipient of the free e-book is happy too, of course, because they receive free information of value to them. Be sure to provide enough solid content that people find reading the promotion material worth it. Balance is key. Can you see how well this could work for you?

**Free Service.** Then there's the idea of a free service (with, of course, this good virus attached). Some people are doing this with free autoresponders and free e-mail service. The process is simple: anytime someone sends out an email, the advertising message, of course, is attached at the end (Hotmail does this, for one).

One service you can start immediately is offering free email service using your domain name as the extension (such as: "jim@mydomain.com.") This is a great way to advertise your domain name! Every time someone uses the service, they see your domain name, plus they also see your brief advertising message at the end of the email. Some web hosting companies will allow you to provide this service (for a little higher monthly fee).

**Free scripts.** You also may want to consider free scripts. Write a script in javascript, cgi or perl (for example) and then make it available to others. Then you just include your advertising information in the comment lines in your script - that you specify must be included each time the script is distributed to or used by

*Continued on page 12*

## Marketing Virus, continued

*Continued from page 11*

someone else. (It works kind of like a resource box - giving you credit and providing a short advertising message for you.)

These scripts can perform a variety of functions — anything from opening a pop up window to password protecting a page on your web site. Anything that can make another webmaster's life a little easier - then you can post the script/s on your web site and let others download it for free (with comment lines included, of course)!

**Software.** Of course there's always free software (if you have the knowledge to program and write your own). The software would include your advertising message (of course!).

**Award.** Give out an award to other web site owners for excellent design, or superior web content . . . whatever kind of award you want to design. This one is easy to do if you can design and create a cool-looking button. Then the recipient of the award can place the button on

their web site. Of course if someone clicks on the button where does it take them? To your web site, of course! When someone receives the award, just email them the code (your button) to place on their site announcing the award.

**Coupons.** Offer coupons that can be freely distributed. Give a fantastic discount on a product or service. Then visitors to your site can print out the coupons and also distribute them to friends. Each

coupon, of course, not only includes a discount for a product or service, but also your brief advertising message and can be reprinted and spread and spread.

As you can quickly see, there are dozens of ingenious ways to spread your virus. If you haven't caught this virus yet, it may be time... because this one's spreading like wildfire! ☘

*Ron Knowlton is a former journalist and founding editor at [www.soaringprofits.com](http://www.soaringprofits.com), which publishes "Articles To Boost Your Success Online!" (subscribe by email to: [subscribe@soaringprofits.com](mailto:subscribe@soaringprofits.com).) Contact Ron at 253 638-6605 or [ron@soaringprofits.com](mailto:ron@soaringprofits.com).*

*"Give out an award to other web sites for excellent design or superior content."*



## Exercise: Building an Index Card (IC) Structure

By Kathy Joyce

Consultants are always looking for exercises and structured experiences that are easy to manage, don't require too much equipment, and still provide opportunities for all the learning we can only get by doing, rather than discussing. Here's a winner.

Building an index card structure can start a meeting or energize a group, and can provide insights about the nature of teamwork and the importance of creating solid foundations. Here's how:

1. Create teams of three to ten participants.
2. Give each team twenty-five index cards. Tell them not to begin until you give a "start" signal.
3. Explain the instructions: "You have five minutes to build a structure using *nothing* but the index cards. The group that builds **the tallest structure that is still standing at the end of five minutes**, wins."
4. Ensure that everyone understands the instructions, and give a "start" signal.
5. Provide a time check every minute, and allow a little extra time if necessary so all groups can finish. (Someone will inevitably ask either "Can we bend the cards?" or "Can we tear the cards?" When you say "You can do anything with the cards, but only the cards," some groups will completely change their approach.
6. At the conclusion of the exercise, it usually only takes a couple of questions to release a flood of insights from participants. Start with:
  - a. What did you learn about building?
  - b. What did you learn about teamwork from this exercise? Probe by asking each team to describe its process in building the structure.
  - c. What lessons can we draw from this for how we operate every day?

The debrief can be short, or quite long. Depending on your objectives, continue to debrief about:

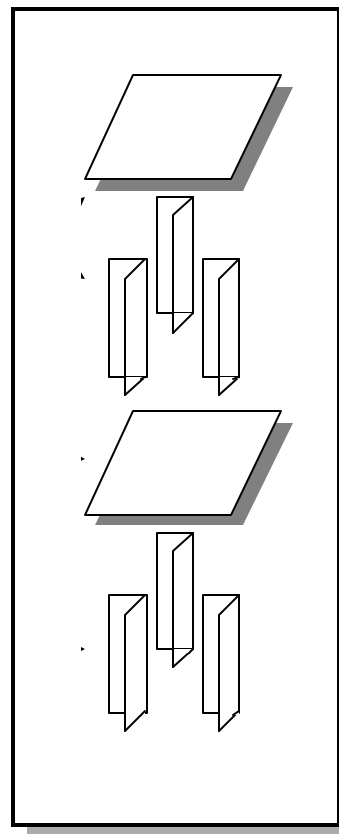
- team formation (including the stages of forming, storming, norming, and performing)
- organization, working together, task assignment or assumption, leadership, decision-making
- how teams share ideas and learn from one another; what happens when one group gets a good idea
- questions that groups ask and how they react to new information.
- how teams balance the tradeoff between height and stability.

- how teams recover and proceed when they try something that fails
- what a team did if their structure fell during building
- the impact of competition

Compare a simple project like the index card structure with a complex project like an organization or work group (e.g., both need a solid foundation, the tradeoffs required between stability and speed or height, and the deliberate attention necessary required to keep the structure from collapsing.)

Groups develop many architectural styles for building their structures, all of which are correct. The diagram provides one common approach that provides both height and stability. ☞

*M. Kathleen Joyce is a consultant based in Washington, DC. She can be reached at 202.636.7478 or mkjoyce@aol.com.*



One Common IC Structure Design

# consulting today

PO Box 293 Ardsley-on-Hudson, NY 10503

Phone: (914) 591-5522 Fax: (914) 591-5237

Web: [www.consultingtoday.com](http://www.consultingtoday.com)

E-mail: [editor@consultingtoday.com](mailto:editor@consultingtoday.com)

## Note to Subscribers:

With this issue we begin a new distribution method for Consulting Today — electronic. We have done that for several reasons:

1. Our summer 2001 survey of CT readers suggested that by a large margin, readers prefer to get small newsletters like this one electronically. They then can print it out themselves and carry it for reading at their leisure. They especially prefer e-delivery if the price can be lowered as a result.
2. A large proportion of the cost of publishing a newsletter like Consulting Today is in the printing process, which adds little real value for readers. In fact, electronic publishing enables more flexible sizing and the additional use of color. Documents in PDF format are easily accessed by most readers, using free Adobe software. (Let us know if that's not true for you.)
3. The climate today favors more electronic delivery. Reducing the amount of mail is a common goal for busy people.

Ideas, opinions or suggestions? Contact us at [editor@consultingtoday.com](mailto:editor@consultingtoday.com).

**With wishes for a wonderful holiday season,**

## Action

*Here's a **To Do** list based on the contents of this issue:*

- ☐ Consider a change project you have had recently or coming up. Who would be appropriate for membership in a change-leadership network? How can you implement Jeff and Chuck's steps?
- ☐ List the things you might include in your next project or group that could support working virtually? Review Kathy's considerations as you begin your effort.
- ☐ Based on Art's list, make a list (somewhere handy) of the things you want to remember to do before your next big presentation. To increase your effectiveness in any meeting, make a habit of doing these things.
- ☐ How can you use this list of behaviors for managers? If you're in a period of change, you can implement them for yourself, your staff, or your colleagues. How about a brief presentation for managers at your client's company?
- ☐ Most of us are going to have to market on the web eventually. Ron's article has some neat ideas to start with or to add to your current program. They don't cost much!
- ☐ Kathy's index card structure is the easiest exercise in terms of instructions, equipment, and space requirements that we've seen in a long time. A pack of index cards should do it.
- ☐ What would you like to read about? Write about? Let us know. E-mail Consulting Today at ([editor@consultingtoday.com](mailto:editor@consultingtoday.com))

**consulting today** is published quarterly, plus special issues. ISSN: 1095-1911

Publishers: Paula Yardley Griffin, Douglas D. Griffin. High Meadow Resources, 400 Birch Lane, Irvington, NY 10533

**Subscriptions and correspondence: PO Box 293, Ardsley-on-Hudson, New York 10503**

**Phone: (914) 591-5522 Fax: (914) 591-5237 E-mail: [editor@consultingtoday.com](mailto:editor@consultingtoday.com)**

**Subscriptions: 1 yr. \$25.00 (4 PDF issues) through our website: [www.consultingtoday.com](http://www.consultingtoday.com).**

**US dollars/bank. Major cards accepted. Group subscription rates are available for your company or organization.**

Copyright © 2001, High Meadow Resources. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted by any means without written permission of the publisher.

Back issues of **consulting today** articles are available at \$10.00 each on the website. Special issues from \$10.00  
Special rates and permissions are available for education.